

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO LATIN AMERICA

THESIS

Valerie S. Payne, Captain, USAF

AFIT/GTM/LAL/95S-11

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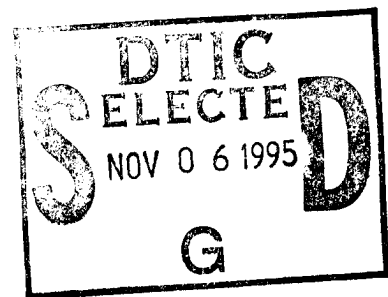
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U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO LATIN AMERICA

THESIS

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Valerie S. Payne, B.A., M.S.

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Valerie S. Payne

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Abstract

The United States employs security assistance as an instrument of foreign policy. This thesis examines how security assistance was used to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives in Latin America since the end of World War II. Qualitative analysis was used consisting of historical and archival research of government documents and secondary sources. A literature review was conducted to discover general trends concerning security assistance to include its establishment as an arm of foreign policy, its problems, and its purpose. Presidential policies toward Latin America are analyzed during and after World War II, to include Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, Nixon Doctrine, Carter's human rights policies, and the containment policies of Reagan. The histories of five Latin American countries are examined to specifically discover how the U.S. has used security assistance to achieve its foreign policy objectives. The countries examined are Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Findings concerning South American countries include a tendency for the U.S. to use security assistance as an incentive to reward democratic and pro-U.S. behaviors. Findings in Central America include the use of security assistance to fight internal subversion in an effort to maintain the status quo and deter communism.



## U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO LATIN AMERICA

### I. Introduction

Since nations of people united to become sovereign states, they have attempted to use their power to influence others to advance their own interests. A state imposes its will upon others by using economic, social, and political pressure, as well as military force. The United States (U.S.) is similar to other states in this respect and has used each of these tools in its foreign policy. Over the years, programs have developed to aid in implementing this foreign policy. One of these is the U.S. Security Assistance Program.

Security assistance includes the sale and grant of military arms, services, and training to foreign countries. As an arm of foreign policy, security assistance was developed to promote peace and regional stability by deterring aggression and enhancing cooperation among nations. In the case of Latin America, security assistance was first envisioned as a necessity to meet the need for a collective defense of the Western hemisphere. By ensuring our allies have the capability to maintain their own self-defense, the need for American intervention is decreased. The Department of Defense has actively participated in trying to influence the direction of security assistance. The U.S. military in many instances must implement the policies that form the security assistance program. It is in

the military's vital interest that American foreign policy goals of maintaining peace and stability are achieved; it is the warriors who must fight the wars if policy fails.

Since President James Monroe outlined our relationship with Latin America in the Monroe Doctrine, our country has felt a kinship and responsibility for the nations of Central and South America. Since World War II, these countries have received increased attention by foreign policy decision-makers and have been recipients of various benefits of the U.S. security assistance program.

This thesis will examine American foreign policy toward Latin America by analyzing the specific goals that post-World War II Presidents sought to achieve in the underdeveloped nations of Central and South America. This study also attempts to reveal how and why security assistance was chosen to aid in the achievement of these goals. Five Latin American countries will be used to compare and contrast the foreign policy implications to the United States of providing security assistance to countries who behave positively toward the U.S. and withdrawing security assistance to those who demonstrate negative behavior. The history of these five countries will also be used to analyze whether or not security assistance has been helpful to the U.S. in achieving its foreign policy goals in Latin America. The specific thesis questions to be analyzed are:

1. What has been the United States' foreign policy toward Latin America in the years since World War II?
2. What part has security assistance played in the more general area of foreign policy?

3. How has the security assistance program been used in Latin America to implement U.S. foreign policy?

4. Has the program been successful in helping to achieve foreign policy goals?

Historical and archival analysis will be used to study these questions. Sources will be drawn from government, academia, and popular literature. The five countries studied, in hopes of identifying changing patterns and objectives in the U.S. security assistance program since World War II are Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States remains the only superpower. Because of our role as world leader, other nations look to us in time of crisis. We need a foreign policy with clear objectives so that other nations will know what they can expect from us in the way of security assistance.

With increased communication and decreased trade barriers among nations, the world is becoming smaller. The countries of Latin America, our neighbors, will become increasingly important to us in the future. Crises that occur there will affect the United States more and more in years to come. It is imperative that our security assistance goals for this region be clearly defined.

The United States military is often directly affected by the foreign policies our civilian leaders make. The military will most likely be tasked on an ever-increasing basis for peacekeeping operations in Third World countries. Somalia and Haiti are recent examples. Because military leaders are often called upon to advise the civilian leadership on possible outcomes of these operations, it is important for military leaders to educate

themselves in the areas of foreign policy and security assistance. It is hoped that this thesis will contribute valuable historical information to both military and civilian leaders in the area of security assistance to Latin America.

## II. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used to examine the nature of U.S. security assistance to Latin America. A broad spectrum of disciplines, such as history, sociology, anthropology, and political science, is better studied by qualitative analysis than by the quantitative methods used when numerical data are collected and analyzed (Strauss, 1987:1). U.S. security assistance is a topic of interest to both historians and political scientists and so is a perfect candidate for qualitative analysis because it embodies elements of these disciplines.

This thesis uses the qualitative methods of historical analysis and archival analysis to answer its four research questions. These methods were chosen because the researcher has no control over the events studied and the focus is on historical rather than contemporary events. The research questions ask “what” and “how,” linking them to ideas that need to be traced over time (Yin, 1989:18). This chapter describes the nature, attributes, and purposes of qualitative research. Some techniques useful in performing qualitative research are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of qualitative research strategies and why historical analysis and archival analysis are particularly appropriate to the research questions being studied here.

### Nature of Qualitative Research

The researcher’s choice between qualitative and quantitative methods depends upon the nature of the phenomena to be studied. The researcher who studies an objective,

structured aspect of the world, governed by general, simple laws of nature, will most likely choose quantitative analysis to reveal underlying patterns of relationships or causes. The researcher who attempts to describe and analyze some naturally occurring phenomena using subjective interpretation will probably choose qualitative analysis to approach the subject (Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991:116). Qualitative studies are best suited for describing settings, people, events, and processes. "Doing description" is the fundamental role of qualitative research (Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991:115).

The role of U.S. security assistance to Latin America is a phenomenon over which the researcher exerts no control. It is a topic open to subjective interpretation. Although quantitative data exist describing U.S. security assistance to Latin America, its true nature, causes and effects, cannot be revealed by studying numbers alone. For this reason, extensive description is needed to answer the research questions, requiring a qualitative analysis.

#### Attributes of Qualitative Research

The attributes of qualitative research include a reliance on secondary analysis of existing data. Very diverse materials from government sources, academia, and popular literature provide indispensable data for social science research. There are no hard and fast rules governing the conduct of qualitative research as there are in quantitative analysis (Strauss, 1987:1). Individual research styles responding to the limitless number of research topics available would be constrained and stifled if rigid methods were enforced (Strauss, 1987:7).

This thesis will rely on secondary analysis of existing sources to arrive at its conclusions. Some primary sources will be used, consisting of archival data in the form of government documents. Primary sources of data, such as personal or telephone interviews, are inappropriate for a study of this magnitude and unnecessary given the abundance and variety of other primary and secondary sources available. The researcher's personal investigative style, rather than a documented set of step-by-step procedures, is used to ascertain trends and patterns in U.S. security assistance and to compare and contrast how security assistance was employed in five Latin American countries. This personal investigative style consists of the researcher's subjective judgment in choosing the most useful sources and determining the most important themes to analyze.

#### Purposes of Qualitative Research

The purposes of qualitative research include providing better understanding through familiarity or insight. This research could be accomplished in an entirely new area of study or by looking at an existing area of knowledge in a whole new way. Another goal of qualitative research is to accurately describe the characteristics of a particular situation or process. It often traces events over time (Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991:122). Qualitative research also lends itself to the exploration of cause and effect. "It allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relationships among the variables under investigation" (Yin, 1989:28).

This thesis attempts to provide a better understanding of the role U.S. security assistance played in American foreign policy toward the countries of Latin America. This

is not a new area of research. However, it is hoped that by comparing and contrasting the five countries chosen, new insight may be gained. America's Latin American policy is described in detail, as well as the implications to the United States of using security assistance as reward and punishment in specific countries. The study is conducted over the time period from World War II through the Bush administration. In analyzing whether or not security assistance helped to achieve foreign policy goals, some causal relationships are assumed. For example, if policy goals were achieved and security assistance was used in a particular country, it is assumed that the use of security assistance, at least partly, led to the foreign policy success. Yin states that the purposes of qualitative analysis are to explore, describe, and explain (Yin, 1989:15). The nature of this study, as just outlined, makes qualitative analysis better suited to achieve its goals.

### Techniques of Qualitative Research

Some techniques that are used in qualitative research are systematic observation, the research interview, and the study of archival and trace measures (Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991:126). Systematic observation has been most successfully used in the social science fields of anthropology and sociology. However, it is not useful for a historical study of this kind when the events of interest are in the past. The research interview is an excellent tool for gathering qualitative data on how individuals perceive events of interest (Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991:139). However, the historical nature of this research makes it impossible to interview most people involved. The third technique involves the study of archival and trace measures. Archival measures are documents and records generated in



the course of daily activity. Trace measures are based on physical evidence left behind after an event takes place (Schmitt and Klimoski, 1991:150). For this study, trace measures are non-existent. However, because the topic deals with the U.S. government, there is an abundance of archival data available. These archival measures include Congressional records, Presidential speeches, and State Department personnel speeches and interviews.

### Qualitative Research Strategies

Yin lists the five major qualitative research strategies in the social sciences: experiments, surveys, archival analysis, historical analysis, and case studies (Yin, 1989:17). He bases his choice of qualitative research strategy on three conditions: the type of research question asked, the extent of control the researcher has over actual events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin, 1989:16).

The type of research question to be asked gives direction as to the kind of study that should be conducted. This thesis poses “what” and “how” types of research questions. The “what” questions indicate that an exploratory study is appropriate. Any of the five research strategies may be used successfully to conduct an exploratory study, although surveys (questionnaires) and archival analysis are the most common methods used (Yin, 1989:17). In contrast, “how” questions indicate that an explanatory strategy is necessary because these questions tend to require tracing variables over time (Yin, 1989:18). The experiment, historical analysis, and case study are types of explanatory research strategies.

To distinguish between experiments, historical analysis, and case studies, Yin recommends that researchers determine the extent of control they will have over the events studied. Experiments are generally conducted when the researcher can exert a great deal of control over the setting and variables in question. A properly conducted experiment requires that the researcher be able to control any factors beyond the scope of the experiment. Historical analysis and case studies are preferred when there is little or no control (Yin, 1989:20).

The final criterion to consider when choosing a research strategy is whether the events in question are focused in history or contemporary times. The case study is most advantageous for contemporary events. Although some historical analysis takes place in case study research, direct observation and systematic interviewing are often integral parts of the case study. Historical analysis is the preferred strategy when events take place in the past and researchers must rely on documents or artifacts as the main sources of evidence (Yin, 1989:19).

By applying Yin's framework, it is clear that historical analysis is the appropriate strategy to be used in conducting the research for this study. Research strategies are not mutually exclusive and are often used in conjunction with each other. For this thesis, because so much archival data exist in the form of government documents, archival analysis will also be conducted. By using sources from such diverse areas as academia, popular literature, and government archives, the potential problem of construct validity may be alleviated (Yin, 1989:97). Any subjectivity that the researcher may have included

in the findings is minimized if multiple sources of evidence are found to agree. Any conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different types of sources.

### Summary

This thesis will use the qualitative methods of historical and archival analysis to answer four research questions concerning U.S. security assistance to Latin America. Qualitative analysis is chosen because the research area is open to subjective interpretation and cannot be analyzed adequately by applying quantitative methods. A more vivid description of events is needed. Because events studied took place in the past, only secondary material is available for research. The researcher's personal investigative style, including subjective judgment in determining the most important themes to analyze, will be used to study these sources rather than well-documented procedures reserved for quantitative analysis. The purpose of this study is to provide understanding through explanation, detailed description, and the exploration of causal relationships. This approach reflects the very nature of qualitative analysis: to explore, describe, and explain.

Historical and archival analysis are the researcher's preferred qualitative strategies because the structure of the research questions, "what" and "how," indicate that exploratory and explanatory methods are required. The researcher has no control over the events of interest because they happened in the past. These factors make historical analysis the logical and most favorable strategy. Research strategies are often used in

conjunction with one another. Because of the abundance of archival data available, archival analysis will also be used in hopes that by studying multiple sources, the accuracy and credibility of the study's results will be enhanced.

### III. Literature Review

This literature review will begin with a discussion of the components of the U.S. security assistance program. The history of its development will be traced, considering both Presidential and Congressional roles in the process, as well as some problem areas. The importance of the program to American foreign policy will be discussed, as well as objectives and decision-making criteria to consider before implementing the program. The security assistance program in the specific region of Latin America will be briefly examined, followed by the program's history in that region and current trends.

#### Components of U.S. Security Assistance

There are several distinct components of the U.S. security assistance program outlined in Military Assistance and Foreign Policy: the Military Assistance Program (MAP); the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET); Foreign Military Sales (FMS); Foreign Military Sales Financing; Commercial Sales; and the Economic Support Fund (ESF). MAP provides grants to American allies for the purchase of weapons and military hardware. The purpose is to strengthen the defensive position of these countries. The American taxpayer bears the cost of this program. The IMET Program has been responsible for the training of over 500,000 foreign military members (Military Assistance and Foreign Policy, 1990:4). It provides training in basic technical skills, professional military education, military doctrine, and English language classes at little or no cost to our allies. FMS allows for the purchase of American weapons systems and military hardware by eligible governments. This program's purpose is to promote American

foreign policy interests at no cost to the taxpayer. The program also monitors licensing and agreements that allow production of military systems using American technology within foreign nations. Foreign Military Sales Financing provides loans to those allies who could not otherwise afford to maintain an adequate defense structure. The program finances loans at lower than market interest rates. Commercial Sales encompasses all arms sales by U.S. arms manufacturers directly to foreign governments. The government is not responsible in any way for these sales except to make the laws and regulations that govern them. The ESF gives loans or grants to foreign countries for economic and infrastructure development, health and agricultural programs, and capital investment. The purchase of military equipment with these funds is strictly prohibited.

#### History of the U.S. Security Assistance Program

Klare gives some explanation of how U.S. security assistance programs were established. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the policy of containment led to an emphasis on arming those countries closest to the Soviet Union and China. Billions of dollars in aid went to such countries as Greece, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Taiwan, and South Korea (Klare, 1988:78-81). As the United States began to supply arms to its allies after World War II, a requirement arose to establish laws that would govern military exports. The Mutual Security Act of 1954 assigned the responsibility for controlling these exports to the President. The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 is a comprehensive act that details the specifics of all aspects of foreign assistance. The Foreign Military Sales Act (FMS) of 1968 was passed by Congress to separate legislation concerning foreign military

sales from legislation concerning military grants. Congress hoped to gain greater control over the sales portion of security assistance by passing the FMS (Smith, 1978:346).

Two crucial events in the 1970s led to an escalation of U.S. arms sales to additional areas of the globe. The American defeat in Vietnam led to a greater willingness to sell arms to Third World nations so that they could take on a greater responsibility for their own defense. This attempt to shift what had formerly been viewed as U.S. defense responsibilities to the countries themselves became known as the Nixon Doctrine. At the same time, the rise in oil prices led to a drive to increase foreign arms sales to oil-producing countries (Klare, 1988:82). As sales of sophisticated weapons to Middle Eastern countries grew, Congress became concerned that the arms program was in need of revision. The International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 was the first attempt to establish a formal policy for military sales. Even though overall sales continued to rise, sales to a number of Latin American countries began to decline in the late 1970s because of restrictions imposed by Congress for human rights violations (Klare, 1988:84).

When Jimmy Carter came to office in 1976, his goal was to reduce conventional arms transfers. As a candidate, he declared that the United States could not be “both the world’s leading champion of peace and the world’s leading supplier of the weapons of war” (Husbands, 1979:155-156). This proved to be a difficult goal to achieve because of America’s historical dependence on arms sales to fulfill foreign policy objectives. Carter was successful in maintaining already established levels of arms transfers to most

countries, but his emphasis on achieving peace in the Middle East resulted in major increases to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel (Lewis, 1979:184-185).

Klare describes the Reagan years as a return to the liberal sales policies of the Nixon administration. In July 1981, Reagan signed a presidential directive that rescinded the Carter policy. It established new guidelines indicating arms transfers were “a vital and constructive instrument” of U.S. foreign policy, not an instrument to be used by exception only, as in the Carter years. The Reagan administration continued to weigh the merits and hazards of arms transfers on a case-by-case basis. However, favorable consideration was generally given to those transfers that enhanced “the state of preparedness” of friends and allies (Klare, 1988:88).

W. Seth Carus outlines the transfer of chemical and missile technology as a major concern of the Bush administration (Carus, 1990:55). Slowing the pace of nuclear proliferation and technology transfer continues to be a factor influencing foreign arms sales in the current administration.

Lewis documents the Congressional role in U.S. security assistance. In particular, the House and Senate Foreign Affairs Committees have become more active in recent years in advocating a larger role for Congress in establishing guidelines and supervising the programs. The Senate has questioned the effectiveness and the rationale of programs, while the House has viewed military assistance as an important tool of foreign policy that it would hope to influence (Lewis, 1979:195).



Mortsolf and Samelson state that Congress is becoming more and more disposed to micro-manage foreign policy. Their study describes how Congress has been generally supportive of administration policy over the years, but is becoming increasingly inclined to regulate the disbursement of funds. Over the years, Congress had been slowly delegating this disbursement of funds in the foreign policy arena to the executive branch. Now it seems to be regaining an interest in these affairs that had waned. The authors cite evidence that Congress views the executive role as convincing the American people of the need for U.S. security assistance rather than managing the program (Mortsolf and Samelson, 1990:176-7).

M.T. Smith writes of the problems associated with these programs. He points out that a lack of policy guidance has left the parties responsible for the U.S. security assistance program without clear objectives (Smith, 1978:363). He argues that with so many different programs, no one agency is monitoring aggregate sales to a foreign nation. There are many departments and agencies of the executive branch, at least six congressional committees, numerous interest groups, and the public that all have an interest in these decisions. This diversity could lead to decisions that are not beneficial to U.S. interests.

#### Importance of Security Assistance to American Foreign Policy

Andrew J. Pierre describes in his work, The Global Politics of Arms Sales, three fundamental reasons why foreign arms sales have become so important to American foreign policy. He cites the sheer numbers of weapons being transferred, as well as the

increased number of foreign states involved in the transfers, as a major factor. At the same time as the numbers have been increasing, there has been a decline in the traditional instruments of diplomacy, such as alliances and the credibility of a threat of direct intervention. The third fundamental reason is the redistribution of power that has taken place with the ending of the Cold War and the emergence of regional powers, particularly in the Middle East (Pierre, 1982:275-6).

Pierre reports the broad U.S. policy objectives of foreign arms sales. He states that the U.S. is looking to influence the foreign policy of other nations by using arms sales as leverage. The Carter decision to sell fighter jets to Egypt to dissuade Anwar Sadat from breaking off peace negotiations with Israel demonstrates this objective (Pierre, 1982:16). Another broad policy objective is to aid nations in meeting their security requirements and therefore add stability to unstable regions. The transferring of arms to our NATO allies, Japan, and South Korea exemplifies this objective (Pierre, 1982:19). The final broad policy objective as described by Pierre is to obtain economic benefits. Historically, arms sales have improved the U.S. trade balance. In addition, foreign arms sales provide much needed employment in the defense industry (Pierre, 1982:24).

Louscher and Sperling add another broad objective in their study, "Arms Transfers and the Structure of International Power." They see the possibility of enhancing U.S. military capabilities through increased exports of weapons systems. When oil-rich states became financially powerful enough to purchase high-tech weapons previously denied to them before the oil price increase of the 1970s, suppliers of state-of-the-art equipment found an

expanded market for their products. The U.S. defense industrial base can pass along a portion of the significant development and procurement costs of high-tech weapon systems to these foreign buyers. By keeping unit costs down, the American military can afford to purchase more capability than if they had to pay all costs themselves (Louscher and Sperling, 1994:75).

Sanders writes of the decision-making criteria that U.S. policy makers consider when deciding whether to grant a request for U.S. security assistance. The contemplated action should promote stability in the region. The assistance given should be able to help an ally defend itself in case of aggression against it. The requesting nation's record of support for U.S. policy should be considered as well as the possibility of technology transfer to unauthorized nations as a result of the assistance (Sanders, 1990:160-2).

#### Security Assistance in Latin America

Brzoska and Ohlson give a historical overview of how U.S. security assistance programs have been managed in Latin America. Arms sales to Latin America have never reached the same high levels as those to other regions, such as the Middle East, but they have been increasing. This is in spite of the fact that several South American countries have built their own defense industries to the point where they can now export arms (Brzoska and Ohlson, 1987:30).

Hovey's review of the early days of security assistance to Latin America, shortly after World War II, provides background for the purpose of the Mutual Security Act of 1951. This was a set of executive agreements between the U.S. and thirteen Latin American

nations that were made to elicit support for the U.S. in the defense of the Western hemisphere against communism. Under the Act, each nation must agree “to make the full contribution to the maintenance of its own defensive strength and the defensive strength of the free world” before receiving military assistance (Hovey, 1965:51-53).

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute details the history of Latin American policy through several Presidential administrations. During the 1950s, the U.S. gave aid to Latin America in a haphazard manner. Each of the military services provided its own training and services with no coordination among the branches (SIPRI, 1975:271). During the 1960s, the Cuban revolution led to a change in emphasis to strengthen the internal security of Latin American countries against communism. Training programs rose substantially during the '60s and shifted their emphasis from technical military skills to a political emphasis on democratic principles (SIPRI, 1975:273). Military assistance program goals of this era included Americanizing doctrine, organization, and tactics of other countries; strengthening regional alliance systems; and obtaining intelligence (Wolpin, 1972:16).

Wolpin sees America's loss of prestige because of Vietnam as reason why U.S. policymakers intensified their efforts to use Latin Americans as proxies for both training and counterinsurgency interventions in the 1970s (Wolpin, 1981:39). The 1970s also saw an increase in restrictions of arms sales to nations that violated human rights. These restrictions were partly the reason why so many South American countries have built up their internal defense industries (SIPRI, 1975:281).

Kurth discusses the many problems that plagued U.S.-Latin American relations in the 1980s. They include disintegrating relations between Nicaragua and the U.S.; guerrilla warfare in El Salvador; the Falkland Islands War between Argentina and Britain; and U.S. intervention in Grenada and Panama (Kurth, 1990:23). These problems presented a challenge for policymakers in view of increasingly differing perspectives between Latin America and the United States.

The U.S. continues to view Latin American affairs as affecting its own security interests while Latin America feels more and more as if its internal affairs are of no concern to the United States. A majority of Latin American countries condemned the U.S. intervention in Grenada (Munoz, 1990:31). Some scholars argue that the original motivation behind the coalition in 1983 of several Latin American countries, known as the Contadora group, was to end unwanted U.S. intervention in Nicaragua rather than its stated objective of preventing the war from spreading to other Central American countries (Bloomfield, 1990:132).

Pierre describes another developing trend in Latin America. The number of suppliers to Latin America has increased. Countries such as Israel, Canada, West Germany, and Italy now rival the U.S. in supplying arms (Pierre, 1982:233).

### Summary

The literature review has covered the components of the U.S. security assistance program. It gave a brief history of how the program evolved from the 1950s through the Bush presidency. The role of Congress in shaping the program and some of the problems

associated with the administration of the program were briefly explored. The importance of security assistance within the broader realm of American foreign policy was discussed. The works of four different authors were used to explore the objectives of the U.S. security assistance program. Several decision making criteria were listed for consideration when implementing the program.

The security assistance program specifically designed for Latin America was also briefly discussed. Some of the historical trends spanning several decades were listed as well as some current trends. Security assistance to Latin America began ineffectively in the early post-World War II era but quickly strengthened as Cold War tension increased. An emphasis on human rights during the 1970s led to a decrease in security assistance to Latin America. Partially as a result of this policy, many Latin American arms importers built their own defense industries, enabling them to export arms to other parts of the world.

#### IV. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America

This chapter outlines America's foreign policy toward Latin America during and after World War II, emphasizing the variety of objectives that different presidents have sought to achieve in the region. With the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960, policy objectives broadened in scope to include economic and social reform under a new program entitled the Alliance for Progress. Because of America's involvement in Vietnam, Richard Nixon attempted to limit direct American involvement in Latin America with policy objectives that became known as the Nixon Doctrine. Jimmy Carter's policies toward Latin America were influenced by the controversy concerning human rights abuses perpetrated by governments receiving U.S. aid. Ronald Reagan's primary objective in the region was to safeguard the Western hemisphere from any attempt by the Soviet Union or its proxies to advance the spread of communism.

##### World War II and the 1950s

Latin American affairs remained fairly insignificant to the U.S. government until after World War II. Prior to the war, Americans were relatively indifferent to their southern neighbors, just as they were indifferent to much of the rest of the world (Historical Division, 1995:483). During the war, the need for national defense became paramount. Some countries were given huge sums of money to aid in the defense of the American continents in case the war should advance to the Western hemisphere. "The United States has spent billions of dollars to build Latin-American good will for the sake of a united war

front,” claimed Osgood Hardy, a State Department official, in 1945 (Hardy, 1945:7593). However, not much attention was paid to how the money was spent within the countries themselves. Hardy relates examples of aid sent to build schools that in actuality was used to build mansions for public officials (Hardy, 1945:7593).

This lack of interest is indicative of the policy within the United States at the time that the least amount of interference within the inner workings of Latin America would be most beneficial to all governments involved. It was considered to be in the American interest to respect the sovereignty of other nations and move away from the previous U.S. policy of “strong arm diplomacy” (Connally, 1945:9901). American policy had shifted from imperialism to a tendency to consult with the American republics on any matters affecting “peace on the continent” (Connally, 1945:9902). It was believed that through mutual respect, consultation, and action, the best shield could be placed between the American continents and communism (Connally, 1945:9902). Appeasement of Latin American dictators was considered to be in the interest of the United States at the same time the U.S. was fighting dictators in Europe (Coffee, 1945:A1197).

U.S. Ambassador Braden’s interference within the internal affairs of Argentina during its 1946 election was an indicator of the future path of American foreign policy toward Latin America. In spite of America’s good neighbor policy and intention to remain neutral in country elections, Braden was outspoken and circulated material about the influence that Nazi leaders had on candidate Juan Peron. Peron’s opposition party, the Democratic Union, received U.S. support (Lima-Dantas, 1985:53).



Even though aggression in Europe and the Pacific had been defeated in World War II, the U.S. realized that the threat of communism to the Western hemisphere was just as dangerous to American interests. Again, the American republics formed a bond for common defense. According to Henry Holland, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, had it not been for the willingness of the Latin American republics to come together in defense of the hemisphere in the Organization of American States, the U.S. would not have been able to assume its military responsibilities in the rest of the world required by nature of its superpower status (Holland, 1955:600). In addition, the countries of Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia were willing to shoulder some of the responsibility by sending their militaries to other parts of the world as well (Holland, 1955:600).

The realization that communism is more likely to develop in a country with social unrest and economic problems led the U.S. to begin focusing on building up the economies of the vulnerable Third World nations (Historical Division, 1955:484). President Eisenhower stated, "It is essential for the security of the United States and the rest of the free world that the United States take the leadership in promoting the achievement of those high levels of trade that will bring to all the economic strength upon which the freedom and security of all depends" (Holland, 1955:602). Latin America became an important trading partner with the United States, exporting such products as oil, minerals, coffee, sugar, cocoa, bananas, and cotton (Eglin, 1984:109). Latin America also became important to the U.S. politically. The countries of the region have almost

always cast their votes in the United Nations in favor of the U.S. position (Historical Division, 1955:484).

### Kennedy's Alliance For Progress

When Kennedy was elected in 1960, the focus of American foreign policy toward Latin America broadened to encompass social reforms as well as economic progress. Kennedy believed this increased scope of reforms could be achieved with the help of the Latin American countries themselves. After all, the U.S. had succeeded in the awesome task of rebuilding the war-torn economies of Europe. He called his far-reaching plan the Alliance for Progress, "a vast cooperative effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose, to satisfy the basic needs of the American people for homes, work and land, health and schools...." (Kennedy, 1961:472).

Kennedy realized that economic development was no substitute for social reforms. In a message to Congress in April 1961, he wrote,

"Economic growth without social progress lets the great majority of the people remain in poverty, while a privileged few reap the benefits of rising abundance. The Alliance for Progress is an effort to create a social framework within which all the people of a nation can share in the benefits of prosperity, and participate in the process of growth." (Kennedy, 1961:475)

Kennedy's plan called for a program of improved land use, education, health, and housing.

Kennedy recognized that without economic development and social progress, desperate people would turn to any system that promised change, even communism or another form of tyranny. The tyrannical forces that promised social change were well-

organized, skillful, and strongly financed. Only a massive cooperative effort to strengthen democratic institutions could hope to repel them (Kennedy, 1961:474).

Until democracy was able to take root, however, military assistance was required so that Latin American governments could defend themselves against these threats to internal subversion. It was hoped that as confidence in economic and social reforms grew, money could be diverted from the purchase of arms for more constructive purposes and the Latin American military units could be used for building projects, similar to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Kennedy, 1961:473).

For the first time, emphasis was placed on forming democratic governments in the countries of Latin America. Formerly, the U.S. government seemed to have no preference as to what type of government a country enjoyed as long as it was not communist. By 1962, communism had expanded to 18 countries worldwide and a third of the world's population (Rusk, 1962:896). The Kennedy administration saw developing nations as the battleground communists were trying to win. According to Secretary of State Rusk, "Communists did not create the revolutionary forces at work in the less developed areas; but they aim to exploit them to the fullest. They aim to isolate, neutralize, subvert, and take over the less developed nations as opportunity and their own ingenuity permit" (Rusk, 1962:897).

Cuba's fall to communism added fuel to the fire of revolutionary movements happening in other Latin American countries (Stevenson, 1961:141). There was believed to be widespread popular support in other countries of the region for the Cuban revolution's

goals of land reform, popular education, social equality, removal of foreign business influences, and defiance of the United States. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion only added to the popular support because it showcased America's inability to remedy the situation. While Kennedy and the American people moaned of a communist takeover, the majority of people in Latin America saw it simply as a social revolution. The U.S. had to convince some Latin American governments that the problem was not solely between the U.S. and Cuba over compensation for seized properties. The real cause for concern was that the communists had established a beachhead in the Western hemisphere (Stevenson, 1961:143).

The failed invasion did nothing to enhance the U.S. image in the eyes of its Latin American neighbors since nonintervention was still the cardinal rule of the good neighbor policy (Stevenson, 1961:143). Confidence in the collective approach to deter communist subversion and aggression had to be rebuilt. Revolutionary elements had to be shown that democratic regimes working in cooperation with the United States offered the best hope for economic and social progress. The need for countries to participate in self-help measures and structural reforms in areas such as land ownership and taxation called for by the principles of the Alliance for Progress became less important as a prerequisite to receiving American aid (Stevenson, 1961:143).

After Kennedy's assassination, Johnson continued the policies of the Alliance for Progress. He also realized that weak, fragile societies would be vulnerable to communist subversion (Johnson, 1965:733). Johnson saw convincing evidence of his beliefs in the

events happening around the world. In October 1965, the Defense Minister of China wrote that the United States, the principal obstacle to communist domination of the world, must be defeated “piece by piece” in “peoples’ wars” in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Johnson, 1965:731). The United States’ interventionist policy was demonstrated in April 1965 when armed force was used in the Dominican Republic after the fall of the Molina Urena government. The invasion was considered justified because between the April 27 fall of the Urena government and the May 3 establishment of the new government under Colonel Caamano, the only identifiable leadership in the country was from the Communist party (Johnson, 1965:736).

For the remainder of the Johnson administration, Latin American affairs were placed in the background. The war in Vietnam became the most important consideration for American foreign policymakers. However, during this period, trade increased between Latin America and the industrialized countries. Economic development was still considered to be vital in deterring communism (Rusk, 1965:988).

### Nixon Doctrine

With the election of Richard Nixon, foreign policy emphasis changed in part to a realization of the global interdependence of all nations of the world. The U.S. moved away from a paternalistic attitude toward Latin America and toward more reliance on the countries themselves to solve their own problems. The new strategy for the 1970s meant maintaining defense forces strong enough to keep the peace--but not allowing wasteful expenditures to drain away resources needed for domestic problems. “It means limiting

our commitments abroad to those we can prudently and realistically keep. It means helping other free nations maintain their own security, but not rushing in to do for them what they can and should do for themselves” (Richardson, 1969:260). America was reeling from the terrible cost of “rushing in” to Vietnam.

Castro’s Cuba was still considered a threat to American interests because of the possible spreading effect to other countries. Nixon chose to deal with allies threatened with internal subversion on a case-by-case basis, rather than develop a blanket policy for all. His options included assistance in economic and political development and aid for equipment and training. However, the basis of his anti-communist policy was that the threatened countries themselves should apply their own resources to the struggle. Large-scale intervention by the U.S. would rarely, if ever, be considered a viable option (Richardson, 1969:258). This reliance on allies to bear more of the burden for their own defense, freeing America from foreign entanglements and allowing more U.S. resources to be used for domestic problems became known as the Nixon Doctrine (Esterline and Black, 1975:169).

The Nixon administration was so adamant about applying the Nixon Doctrine and keeping American military forces out of the internal affairs of developing nations that the amount of authoritarian repression a government inflicted upon its people was not a consideration in deciding how much military assistance to provide. Total foreign military sales to Latin America more than doubled from \$48 million in FY 1971 to \$104 million in FY 1972. They almost doubled again from \$105 million in FY 1973 to \$206 million in FY

1974 (Klare, 1988:82). U.S. security assistance to Latin America was used to keep ruthless dictators in power and justified on the basis of battling communism. This American sponsorship of tyranny led to the human rights advocacy movement in the mid-1970s and the stipulation that to qualify for U.S. aid a country must be free of human rights violations (Klare and Arnson, 1981:12).

### Carter and Human Rights

Congress passed legislation linking human rights to U.S. assistance in 1976. President Ford objected to the legislation on the grounds that tying security assistance to any single factor would make decision making too restrictive and could lead to unexpected consequences for national security. In addition, the legislation could have a counterproductive effect because relations could be severed with countries that might otherwise be open to U.S. influence in eliminating human rights abuses (Ford, 1976:742).

Carter agreed with Ford that linking assistance to human rights represented unwarranted interference by Congress in the policy making arena of the executive branch. He saw an inherent conflict with the Congressional policy. He agreed that America should do everything possible to eliminate human rights abuses. However, he also felt that national security interests should outweigh this consideration (Klare and Arnson, 1981:84).

The publicity generated by Congress and the Carter administration toward human rights violations did have some modest effect. In 1977, U.S. criticism against violence in Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, and Guatemala prompted these countries to reject U.S.

military assistance. Washington also failed to support the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza in the final days of his struggle against the Sandinistas (Klare and Arnson, 1981:84).

However, Carter spoke out more vehemently against human rights abuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe than he did in Latin America where the U.S. was guilty of helping to support the abuse (Klare and Arnson, 1981:85).

Carter's general policy concerning arms sales was to refuse them to any country with a record of human rights abuses. However, when he thought it necessary for national security, he was willing to disregard this policy for what he believed to be the overriding consideration, American interests (Benson, 1977:157).

The rise in oil prices in the mid-1970s led to an increased demand for arms transfers from newly rich Middle Eastern countries that could afford impressive arsenals for the first time (Louscher and Sperling, 1994:75). Carter had campaigned on a platform of arms restraint. He declared the approval of arms transfers would be the exception of foreign policy rather than the rule (Benson, 1978:43). However, as every request for arms was weighed against American national security interests, overall arms transfers increased during the Carter years (Klare, 1988:86).

These arms sales sparked controversy and criticism, especially to Latin America, because they usually fell into one of three categories: sales to dictators, sales to countries that used the weapons to threaten a neighboring country causing regional instability or sales to countries that could better use the resources for economic development or social reform (Farley, 1978:122). Congress also attempted to restrain arms transfers by passing



the Arms Export Control Act of 1976. The purpose of this comprehensive act was to consolidate and expand legislative guidance and oversight of arms transfers (Farley, 1978:111).

Global and regional ceilings were imposed by Congress in the early 1970s but were disregarded in an arbitrary fashion. The ceilings were actually no more than goals because they were often exceeded when they became too constraining. The Arms Export Control Act of 1976 was passed by Congress in an attempt to provide more restraint and balance over executive branch guidelines, give to Congress more authority over aggregate levels of sales, and give Congress more influence in directing the scope and character of the U.S. arms trade (Farley, 1978:128).

When first coming to office, the Carter administration was prepared to abandon the notion of containing communism that had been at the heart of American foreign policy since the end of World War II. It was also dedicated to eliminating arms sales as the primary instrument to implement policy (Louscher and Salomone, 1987:20). Carter saw cooperation among the nations of Western Europe, Japan, and America as the key to promoting Third World stability and economic development (Brzoska and Ohlson, 1987:55). He did not share the view of his successor, Ronald Reagan, that the U.S.-Soviet relationship was paramount in foreign affairs. However, events in Central America eroded the foundation of Carter's policies and by the end of his administration, he was earnestly pursuing both containment and the transfer of arms to accomplish his objectives (Louscher and Salomone, 1987:20). His earlier commitment to human rights was almost

abandoned as he feared the repressive governments in Central America would fall to communism without U.S. military assistance (Klare and Arnson, 1981:85).

### Reagan and Bush Years

Reagan battled the encroachment of communism wherever he believed it was trying to take root. In particular, he believed the countries of Central America were vulnerable and the U.S. could not afford to turn away from that threatened region without dire consequences to the future of democracy within the United States (Shultz, 1984:18). His foreign policy was based on the premise that the Soviet Union would exploit the instability of Latin America's Third World nations to sponsor communist revolutions. Cuba was seen as the first step in the Soviet goal of establishing communist satellites in the Western hemisphere. A communist government on the mainland of the Americas would be a vital threat to American interests. These fundamental beliefs formed the core of Reagan's foreign policy toward Latin America (Shultz, 1985:19).

Reagan believed that Carter's weakness and ambiguity in dealing with Central America led to Soviet intervention in the social reform movements taking place there. He was determined to implement forceful policies and used the reward of security assistance to achieve the support and cooperation of other countries in the region. During this period, the strength of the friendship between the U.S. and any Latin American country was based on how strongly that country would support Reagan's policies in Central America. The Reagan administration was not averse to overlooking human rights abuses if necessary in return for cooperation. Central American problems dominated Reagan's foreign policy to

Latin America and caused the neglect of previously important regional allies like Brazil (Oxford Analytica, 1991:249).

Reagan provided large amounts of military assistance to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to accomplish his objective of preventing communism. When Congress eliminated this aid because of human rights atrocities, Reagan authorized covert operations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). His fear that communism might spread to the free world would not allow him to waver in his support for those he saw battling communism on the front lines of Central America (Moreno, 1994:136). There has been much debate since the 1980s about whether history should consider Reagan a visionary or a reactionary in his beliefs about the motives and affiliations of the revolutionaries in Central America.

George Bush, Reagan's successor, shared many of his predecessor's viewpoints about containment and the threat of the Soviet Union. However, public and Congressional pressure had intensified by the time of his election in 1988 and he recognized the necessity of pursuing a diplomatic solution to end the struggles in Central America. Reagan had refused to negotiate or compromise with what he considered subversive elements. Costa Rican President Arias had developed a plan for peace in the region and Bush steered his Latin American policy toward diplomacy and working together with the nations of Latin America to solve their problems (Moreno, 1994:137). By changing American policy in the region from military pressure to diplomatic pressure, Bush provided the key ingredient

that revived the stalled peace process. If Bush had renewed military aid, the opportunity for peace would have been lost (Moreno, 1994:107).

### Future Policy

With the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, American foreign policy is no longer defined by the requirement to fight communism. New challenges await the U.S. in its dealings with other nations. For Latin America, those challenges include increasing trade and economic development so that the people of the region will be able to provide a living for themselves and their families in their own homeland rather than traveling to American shores. The international drug war will continue to be a foreign policy challenge until the U.S. and its Latin American neighbors are successful in eliminating the illegal smuggling of drugs. Finally, the American ideal of establishing democracies in all nations of the Western hemisphere will continue to be a challenge for American foreign policy (Christopher, 1995:2).

### Summary

This chapter has outlined America's foreign policy toward Latin America. It began with a brief description of objectives toward the region during World War II and the 1950s. The broad goals of economic and social reform under Kennedy's Alliance for Progress were discussed. The chapter reviewed Nixon's policy of decreasing U.S. direct involvement in other countries because of America's losses in Vietnam. It also included a

brief analysis of Jimmy Carter's efforts to curb human rights abuses and a review of Reagan's attempts to prevent the spread of communism.

The next chapter will analyze how security assistance has been used in five countries, Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, to achieve American foreign policy objectives.

## V. Foreign Policy and Security Assistance

This chapter describes how security assistance was used in the countries of Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals.

### Argentina

U.S. foreign policy goals in Argentina since World War II have, not surprisingly, mirrored those of Latin America in general. These goals have ranged from providing defense of the hemisphere from Axis powers in World War II to promoting democracy among governments by helping them establish strong economic foundations.

During World War II, the U.S. placed an arms embargo on Argentina because of its government's pro-Axis sympathies. Regional stability was sacrificed for security because, at the same time, Argentine archrival and U.S. staunch supporter, Brazil, was being generously supplied with arms (Poneman, 1987:100).

U.S. foreign aid to Latin America during the 1950s was characterized by efforts to bolster stable, but repressive, regimes because of the products they could provide. As long as these so called "banana republics" disavowed communism, the U.S. was content to contribute the aid necessary to keep the current governments in power. Military or civilian, authoritarian or democratic, as long as the supply of minerals, oil, coffee, bananas or other products continued unabated, economic aid was furnished to these governments (Esterline and Black, 1975:172). Argentina was a classic example of this policy.

In 1946, Juan Peron won the presidency of Argentina by appealing to the working class, whom he molded into a powerful political force. U.S. State Department officials tried to discredit Peron on the eve of the election by linking him to Nazi-like atrocities committed by the Argentine military in 1943-1946. However, Peron was able to use this interference as evidence of U.S. meddling in internal Argentine affairs and won the election with 56 percent of the popular vote (Poneman, 1987:24).

Peron was democratically elected but his presidency was marked with repression and corruption (Poneman, 1987:6). However, his policies brought great reform to the lower classes and he was able to win reelection in 1951. Argentina's foreign policy under Peron shifted between 1946 and 1951. It moved from the pro-Axis leanings of the war years to a more central position. Argentina chose not to ally itself with either the U.S. or the Soviet Union in the bipolar Cold War that was developing. Through this nonalignment approach, Peron believed Argentina's role as a leader in the Latin American region would be strengthened (Lima-Dantas, 1985:55). This policy led to closer ties with other Latin countries as Argentina joined the Organization of American States in 1948 (Robinson, 1985:260).

Peron was overthrown in 1955 by a military revolt, installing General Eduardo Lonardi in office. Between 1955 and 1970, Argentina had seven presidents, five of them installed by military revolt or coup d'etat (Lima-Dantas, 1985:58). Argentina continued to receive U.S. economic support in spite of repression and antidemocratic principles upon which the rapid succession of military and civilian governments based their legitimacy.

During the 1960s, with the establishment of Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, Argentina became a strong U.S. ally. It supported the U.S. blockade of Cuba and was one of two South American countries that sent warships to Cuban waters during the missile crisis (Dominguez, 1990:46). Argentina's government also supported the American military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Between 1950 and 1979, Argentina was rewarded well for its support. It received over \$247 million in the form of grants, credits, and other forms of military aid from the United States. Argentine military members trained on U.S. soil numbered over 4000 (Robinson, 1985:265).

Problems in the U.S.-Argentina relationship began to occur during the Carter administration. In 1978, Carter halted the sale of enriched uranium to Argentina because of its government's refusal to ratify the 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and refusal to sign the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (Poneman, 1987:172). The Carter government also urged other countries of the world to stop their sales of enriched uranium to Argentina. In addition, Carter moved to block the transfer of nuclear technology (Robinson, 1985:266).

Another sensitive area in U.S.-Argentina relations was human rights violations. Because of increased attention to human rights by the American government during the late 1970s, arms sales to Argentina were restricted in 1977-78 due to human rights abuses. The U.S. strongly criticized Argentina for these violations before the United Nations and Organization of American States. Whenever possible, the U.S. used economic leverage, voting against loans to Argentina from international organizations. In retaliation,



Argentina would not honor the grain embargo on the USSR for invading Afghanistan (Robinson, 1985:266). During this period, Argentina refused to accept any military assistance from the United States. Foreign military sales to Argentina were discontinued beginning in 1979 through 1983 (DOD Security Assistance Agency, 1990:328). These years were the low point in U.S.-Argentina relations.

During 1979-80, Argentina's human rights violations began to diminish. Argentina could not afford to totally ignore America's attention on abuses because it was dependent on the U.S. for \$2 billion in trade and \$980 million in various loans (Robinson, 1985:266). When Ronald Reagan took office after the election of 1980, relations began to improve between the two countries. The Reagan administration tended to overlook human rights abuses in exchange for military cooperation in Central America (Oxford Analytica, 1991:249). However, America's loyalty to its long-time ally Great Britain would place additional strain on the relationship.

When the Falklands War first broke out between Great Britain and Argentina, the U.S. remained officially neutral. However, within a few weeks, by the spring of 1982, the U.S. government was openly supporting the British effort (Dominguez, 1990:51). Argentina felt betrayed by its North American neighbor, ended its military involvement in the struggle to keep communism from spreading to Central America, and sought improved relations with Cuba and Nicaragua (Robinson, 1985:267). In an era when the strength of a country's friendship with the U.S. was based on how well the country supported anti-

communist efforts in Central America, Argentina's actions did not win favor in Washington (Oxford Analytica, 1991:249).

With the election of Raul Alfonsin in 1983, the tensions between the two countries did not improve. However, Argentina was in dire financial straits and needed foreign investment (Poneman, 1987:57). High American interest rates were raising Argentina's debt by \$500 million annually for every one percent increase in the U.S. prime rate (Poneman, 1987:12). Alfonsin needed the support of the United States to receive International Monetary Fund agreement for his economic reactivation policy (Robinson, 1987:268). In 1984, Argentina signed an agreement in support of nuclear disarmament with five other countries (Poneman, 1987:186). U.S. foreign military sales to Argentina resumed (DOD Security Assistance Agency, 1990:328).

The foundation of Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, that countries will be more likely to adopt democracy if they participate in solid economic and social reforms, is still evident in today's foreign policy toward Argentina. The U.S. Department of State Dispatch stated that "the primary U.S. goal in Argentina is to strengthen democracy by encouraging political pluralism and economic reforms that will promote sustained growth and social stability" during President Bush's trip to Argentina in 1990 ("President Bush's Trip to Argentina," 1990:326).

Kennedy also recognized the need for military assistance in his Alliance for Progress and today's policy supports this requirement as well. "The reality is that, for the foreseeable future, assuring stability-and enabling our friends to protect themselves-will

require that we continue to provide arms and related services and training when and where appropriate” (Bartholomew, 1991:435). “U.S. policy towards Argentina is always guided first by security interests, second by financial interests, and only third by political interests. When problems arise, Washington’s concern is security; its solution, military” (Poneman, 1987:200).

The U.S. has used security assistance to Argentina as reward for supporting American interests and has withdrawn security assistance as punishment for failing to think or act in ways consistent with American foreign policy. For failure to disavow pro-Axis thinking, provide basic human rights to its citizens, or agree with American nuclear proliferation policy, military assistance to Argentina was withdrawn. In return for supporting American ventures in such areas as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, military aid has been free flowing. Economic and political pressure are also effective tools for imposing one country’s will upon another.

In general, U.S. foreign policy toward Argentina has been successful. World War II did not spread to the Western hemisphere, nuclear proliferation is not a serious threat from the countries of Latin America, and communism did not gain a toehold on the American continents. Human rights violations may still exist in some sectors of Argentine society. As recently as 1989, the military was rumored to have committed human rights offenses. However, the abuses are no longer sanctioned by the government (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:111). In 1989, Carlos Menem became president of Argentina, the first time in 60 years that one civilian president succeeded another (“President Bush’s Trip to

Argentina,” 1990:326). In spite of Argentina’s history of repressive dictatorships, this democratic transition of power offers hope that the Argentine people are on the path to establishing a new tradition of freedom in choosing their own political, economic, and social system.

### Brazil

U.S. relations with Latin America have traditionally centered on two basic principles: collective security from outside threats and nonintervention within the countries themselves (Kurth, 1990:16). Brazil demonstrated its adherence to collective security as the United States’ most important Latin American ally in World War II. Americans and the Brazilian Expeditionary Force worked in close cooperation in Italy during the war (Rudolph, 1983:282).

Brazil has always been a major partner and U.S. supporter in the maintenance of these two principles, even if it means standing up to the United States when American policy veers away from them. During the 1980s, when the Reagan administration attempted to justify a temporary halt to the nonintervention principle in Central America, Brazil and Mexico were opposed, claiming a return to the “Big Stick” practices of Theodore Roosevelt (Munoz, 1990:32). As one of the largest countries in Latin America, Brazil has wielded great influence in the region. The U.S. cannot afford to ignore Brazil’s concerns for very long if it wants its Latin American policy to succeed.

The U.S. and Brazil have always seemed to be of one mind on how the future of Latin America should unfold. However, the U.S. has not been averse to meddling in Brazil’s

internal affairs and violating one of the basic principles that form the foundation of their relationship, the nonintervention principle. In 1964, the U.S. supported a military coup against leftist civilian President Goulart who had not been favorable to American interests during his term of office (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:178). The U.S. promised to provide fuel and weapons to the military rebels who had American ties from serving in the Brazilian Expeditionary Force during the war (Rudolph, 1983:282). Brazil was ruled by a military government until 1985 (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:179).

Relations between the two countries remained positive after the military takeover. Brazil supplied troops for the American military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Under the Alliance for Progress between 1964 and 1971, Brazil received a vast amount of U.S. military and economic aid, with foreign military sales alone totaling almost \$86 million (DOD Security Assistance Agency, 1990:344).

During the 1970s, Brazil began to move away from the shadow of the U.S. and attempted to spread its wings away from America. The U.S. had counted on Brazil as its main partner in pursuing its Latin American agenda during the 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, Brazil became more self-reliant and expanded its horizons to encompass other members of the international community.

In 1970, the Brazilian government declared a 200 mile territorial limit from its coasts, at odds with the United States position of a 12 mile limit. American shrimp boats had to pay a heavy tax to fish at the mouth of the rich Amazon River. In 1974, Brazil entered into a trade dispute with the U.S. over the import of Brazilian shoes (Rudolph, 1983:283).

Also in 1974, when Brazil refused to sign the Treaty of Tlatelolco, prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, America refused to supply Brazil's nuclear fuel. The Brazilian government signed an agreement for fuel with West Germany instead (Eglin, 1983:187). The relationship between the two nations could be characterized as tense during this period when Brazil was seeking more independence from America. With the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, the tension was not relieved. In 1977, ill feelings were exacerbated when Carter pressured West Germany, unsuccessfully, to cancel its sale of nuclear fuel to Brazil (Rudolph, 1983:283).

Brazil paid in terms of reduced military aid for flexing its muscles. Throughout the 1970s, U.S. military aid to Brazil was "minimal" (Rudolph, 1983:284). Brazil's human rights violations were also brought to light in the 1970s. When the Carter administration's first human rights report was made public in 1977, Brazil terminated its acceptance of even the minimal aid it was receiving and sent American military members serving in Brazil home in defiance (Rudolph, 1983:284). It severed its arms relationship with the U.S. and began domestic production. This turning point in U.S. relations led Brazil to undertake an aggressive campaign to build up its own defense industry (Sanders, 1990:32). At this moment in history, Brazil's economic development was ripe for national manufacturing companies and military interests to readily merge in an expansion of the arms industry (Brzoska and Ohlson, 1986:100).

Arms production was a booming business in the 1970s due to an expanded market of newly rich oil countries that for the first time could afford an impressive arsenal of

weapons (Louscher and Sperling, 1994:75). Brazil's growing arms manufacturing capacity, increasing technological competence initially imported from Western Europe, and aggressive marketing skills made the country a major exporter of arms through the 1980s (Sanders, 1990:38).

During the 1980s, the Reagan presidency did not immediately foster the improved relations with Brazil that occurred with Argentina. The Brazilian government agreed with the détente policies of America in the 1970s and was not willing to view the world in the same bipolar fashion that Ronald Reagan saw it. These ideological differences made it difficult for Brazil to support the American agenda that focused on a threatening Soviet Union. Brazil was not interested in U.S. efforts to keep communism out of Central America and refused to join a military alliance to protect the South Atlantic (Rudolph, 1983:282).

Reagan realized that he needed Brazil's support and cooperation if his Latin American policies were to succeed (Kurth, 1990:24). In 1981, the U.S. again pledged to become a reliable supplier of nuclear fuel to Brazil. In 1982, U.S. loans amounted to \$1.2 billion (Rudolph, 1983:284). In 1984, Reagan adopted a new policy toward Brazil. He replaced Carter's policy of denying arms with one that encouraged joint efforts in arms production. The two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding that called for military cooperation (Sanders, 1990:32). Foreign military sales topped \$302 million during the decade (DOD Security Assistance Agency, 1990:344).

Reagan was forced to shift his Brazilian policy focus from ideological issues to economic ones in order to get support for his main priority: stalling the advance of communism (Oxford Analytica, 1991:255). Although Brazil did not enthusiastically support Reagan's interventionist policies in Central America, it did not attempt to undermine them. Regardless of its declared policy of noninvolvement in Central America, Brazil did support the Contras with sales of airplanes to Honduras that were used for operations within Nicaragua (Neuman, 1986:50). There continued to be minor trade disputes between the United States and Brazil but nothing to jeopardize the \$8 billion in annual trade between the two countries (Rudolph, 1983:284).

The U.S. has used security assistance for similar purposes in both Brazil and Argentina. Large amounts of military aid are expended when the country is supporting what the U.S. perceives to be its interests and aid is withdrawn when the recipient no longer shows support for American policy. Aid was given generously when Brazil and the United States were allies during World War II and when they agreed upon other military matters such as the American intervention in the Dominican Republic and the benefits of military rule for Brazil. When Brazil attempted to move out of America's shadow to pursue actions the U.S. believed were against its national interests, aid was diminished. Brazil's example demonstrates that when a policy requiring support from others becomes as important to the U.S. as Reagan's Central American policy became, security assistance can be an effective means of buying that support.



Brazil has undergone impressive economic development with the help of the U.S. and others. It is now the fifth leading arms exporter in the world (Poneman, 1987:102). Brazil has been democratically ruled since the mid-1980s and shares with the United States a respect for democracy and a commitment to the ideals that will ensure its continuation ("President Bush's Trip to Brazil," 1990:317). The U.S. goal of promoting strong democracies in Latin America has been achieved in Brazil. Security assistance has played an important role in helping to achieve that goal. It has been used as an incentive to reward behaviors that helped to entrench democratic ideals within the Brazilian government.

#### El Salvador

El Salvador did not become a major recipient of U.S. foreign aid until 1980. Total aid spent on this small Central American country from 1946 to 1979 amounted to a mere \$16.7 million (Bonner, 1984:11). Most of the aid was spent under the auspices of the Alliance for Progress. Kennedy considered El Salvador a "showcase for development" and evidence that capitalism could work in poor countries, even those that had been subjected to military rule for decades (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:43). The country was simply not considered important enough or problematic enough to occupy much of the U.S. government's attention, despite its proximity to the American border. The precedence of the Vietnam War further added to El Salvador's low priority in American foreign policy.

In 1979, President Romero's government of El Salvador was overthrown by a civilian-military junta. Political reform was long overdue in the country. The Carter administration's human rights report of 1977 had listed El Salvador as one of the worst offenders (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:108). Carter was being criticized for failing to act quickly enough in the Nicaraguan situation earlier that year. His critics contended opportunities to negotiate with more moderate elements in the government were lost because Washington faltered in dealing with the overthrow of Somoza (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:113). He was determined not to repeat that mistake and asked Congress to immediately dispatch "nonlethal" military aid and American military advisors to El Salvador (Bonner, 1984:95). A few months later, Carter requested an additional \$5.7 million in military aid (Bonner, 1984:4).

In December 1980, four American churchwomen became victims of El Salvador's brutality. Their murders were the most recent of a long list of atrocities directed at church members. The Salvadoran National Guard had persecuted the church for years because it was the only institution that openly challenged the authority of the military (Bonner, 1984:64).

Carter immediately suspended all economic and military aid to El Salvador. Within 12 days, economic aid was restored because Carter's State Department team sent to investigate the murders found no link to government officials or high ranking members of the military. The investigation remained in the hands of the Salvadoran government. The

suspension of military aid would continue, pending further progress in the investigation (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:177).

In January 1981, two more Americans, workers for the American Institute for Free Labor Development, were gunned down by members of El Salvador's National Guard (Bonner, 1984:44). In spite of these new offenses by the military, Carter reversed his policy ten days later and restored all previously suspended military aid. He also requested an additional \$5 million in military aid to the Salvadoran government. Carter's reversal was based on captured documents that revealed the Salvadoran guerrillas were receiving aid from Cuba and other communist nations and were about to launch an offensive from Nicaragua (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:188).

These documents indicated that the insurgency movement could no longer be considered a civil rebellion, but was dependent on outside sources. In order to shore up the Salvadoran government against the rumored offensive, Carter restored military aid by invoking a provision of the Foreign Assistance Act that allows a President to circumvent Congress if he believes "an unforeseen emergency exists which requires immediate military assistance" or that "a failure to respond immediately to that emergency will result in serious harm to vital United States security interests" (Bonner, 1984:225). The reports of a rebel offensive about to take place from Nicaragua were later found to be highly exaggerated (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:188).

Carter's stance on human rights had been virtually ignored by El Salvador since shortly after Carter took office in 1977 and recalled the Salvadoran ambassador, Ignacio Lozano.

Lozano was an outspoken critic of the repressive regime (Bonner, 1984:39). When Reagan was elected in 1980, the Salvadoran military felt an even freer reign to continue its atrocities. A report written by Reagan's State Department Transition Team had leaked to the press. It stated, "Public statements about human rights abuses by Latin American governments have conveyed a stridency that was frequently counterproductive" (Bonner, 1984:218). The Salvadoran government felt that all it had to do was wait for Reagan's inauguration when all the military aid it needed would be guaranteed (Bonner, 1984:212).

With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, national security became the rationale for providing military aid to El Salvador. The domino theory was revived to justify why El Salvador must not be allowed to fall to the communist rebels being supported by Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Soviet Union. A victory against aggressors in the tiny Central American country was considered so important to American national interests that El Salvador's less-than-perfect human rights record could be overlooked in favor of more important considerations (LeoGrande, 1991:127). Reagan called for an additional \$25 million in military aid during his first few months in office. He maintained there would no longer be a distinction between "lethal" and "nonlethal" types of aid and promised Salvadoran business leaders that more help would be forthcoming. Administration officials testified before Congress that the aid would not be linked to any human rights issues (Bonner, 1984:240).

In late 1981, Congress passed a law that required the President to certify every six months that El Salvador was making progress in eliminating human rights abuses as a

condition that the military aid continue. In November 1983, Reagan vetoed a bill that made certification necessary. However, he was forced to certify four times between 1981 and 1983 that human rights were improving or risk the withdrawal of military aid by Congress. This certification was made despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary (Bonner, 1984:76). In reality, 40,000 innocent civilians were killed between the beginning of the coup in 1979 and January 1984, 90 percent murdered by the Salvadoran military. If a comparable proportion of U.S. citizens had been killed, the number would be 1.5 million (Bonner, 1984:62).

Congress tried to restrain U.S. military involvement in El Salvador. To ease Congressional fears of another debacle like Vietnam, the administration informally agreed to limit the number of military advisors to 55. Even though the number seemed small, it was actually a higher proportion than in the early days of Vietnam. The ratio of American soldiers to Vietnamese soldiers was 320; the same ratio in El Salvador was 232. In 1982, training began for Salvadoran officers and troops in the United States and Honduras. Before the training program ended, 1000 troops and 500 officers received training from the American military (Bonner, 1984:277). The Reagan government called for supplemental aid of \$178.7 million for 1984 and \$132.5 million for 1985 (Bonner, 1984:270).

Reagan never wavered in his support to El Salvador throughout his presidency. In 1987, aid from the United States reached \$608 million, more than El Salvador's national budget (Moreno, 1994:36). In 1989, the Salvadoran rebels launched their largest

offensive but failed to overthrow the government or start a popular uprising as they predicted (Moreno, 1994:33). Ten years of war were coming to an end in stalemate and economic ruin for the country. Reagan considered it a victory. International negotiations between the parties began under the Central American peace accord put forward by Costa Rican President Arias. In 1992, the United Nations declared an end to the armed conflict in El Salvador (Moreno, 1994:145).

America's foreign policy goals for El Salvador have been achieved in some respects. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress was achieving success in economic reform when the ten year conflict began. However, if Kennedy's rationale for economic and social reform was to better promote democracy, the Alliance for Progress failed miserably. El Salvador had one of the worst human rights records in modern history. Reagan's sole purpose in providing huge amounts of military aid to El Salvador was to keep communism from spreading to the continents of the Western hemisphere. This goal seems to have been achieved in El Salvador. However, given the current state of underdevelopment and social injustice throughout most of Central America, events might have been different if the vast amount of money spent on military aid for El Salvador had been spent earlier on economic and social reforms under the Alliance for Progress. Perhaps the more worthy goal of establishing strong democracies in Central America, as opposed to simply resisting communism, might have been achieved in El Salvador.

## Guatemala

Guatemala represents another example of the American foreign policy goal of resisting communism in the Western hemisphere. This goal has been achieved to date but human rights abuses in Guatemala are so blatant that it is ludicrous to claim any measure of success from pursuing this policy. U.S. security assistance did not play as vital a role in Guatemala as it played in El Salvador. The use of aid or the threat of its withdrawal has not been as effective here as in many other Latin American countries. From the outset, events in Guatemala represented a departure from the American policies of collective security and nonintervention in the countries of Latin America (Kurth, 1990:19).

After World War II, the U.S. became alarmed that communist influence was beginning to spread through the government of Guatemala. In retrospect, the evidence seems minimal. There were reports that a few communists had gained influential positions in the government and that Guatemala had acquired some Czech arms (Bloomfield, 1990:123). The United States covertly and singularly plotted to support an overthrow of leftist president Arbenz, after other Latin American countries refused at the Tenth Inter-American Conference in March 1954 to interfere within the borders of Guatemala (Dominguez, 1990:43). The operation was equipped and directed by the CIA and led by an obscure Guatemalan colonel, Castillo Armas. Armas was a poor president, who tolerated corruption and would not fight for social reform. However, Washington was pleased that he was not a communist (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:341).

The U.S. became Guatemala's key ally and trading partner, generously giving both economic and security assistance. Between 1962 and 1976, economic assistance totaled \$240 million. The funds were primarily used for rural development, health programs, education, agricultural production, and police force training. During the same period, the U.S. provided \$48 million in military aid, approximately half the total for foreign military sales and the rest for the Military Assistance Program (MAP), the International Military Education and Training program (IMET), and grants for excess defense articles (Rudolph, 1984:173).

In 1977, the U.S. government's human rights report was published emphasizing horrible abuses in Guatemala. Anticipating that the Carter administration would withdraw aid, Guatemala announced that it would no longer accept U.S. military aid (LaFeber, 1991:7). Israel replaced the U.S. as Guatemala's arms supplier and the human rights abuses continued unabated (Robinson, 1991:153). The Carter years saw a deterioration in relations that had formerly been cordial because of Guatemala's refusal to curb its abuses. However, economic aid was continued, reaching \$25 million by 1979. In protest against human rights violations, the U.S. blocked several loans to Guatemala from international organizations (Rudolph, 1984:174).

When Reagan became President, he attempted to improve relations with Guatemala. He stopped the blocking of loans from world organizations, increased economic aid through his Caribbean Basin Initiative, and increased military aid to counter guerrilla threats he saw developing throughout Central America. In 1981, Reagan succeeded in



reclassifying some restricted military items as non-military. Jeeps and trucks valued at \$3 million, as well as several helicopters, were sold to Guatemala during 1981-82. In 1982, the American press reported that some pieces of restricted military equipment had been secretly arriving in Guatemala for two years and that American military personnel were teaching at the Guatemalan military academy (Rudolph, 1984:175).

In March 1982, Rios-Montt came to power in a coup. He declared total war against subversion and was able to convince the U.S. that human rights abuses had diminished when in fact the number of atrocities was unprecedented (Moreno, 1994:43). The five-year old embargo on foreign military sales was lifted. Because Guatemala did not have the finances available to take advantage of the embargo's end, the U.S. provided \$10 million in military assistance in 1984 (Rudolph, 1984:175). The Reagan administration asked few questions about how the military equipment was employed (LaFeber, 1991:7). Congress, on the other hand, suspended military sales the following year (Robinson, 1991:154). Guatemala was a human rights embarrassment to a country like the United States that stood for certain inalienable rights.

In 1985, the military rulers of Guatemala allowed a free election to establish stability and legitimacy to a country isolated from the world because of its human rights record and devastated economy. Unfortunately, the civilian government that came to power had no control over the military and its obsession to stamp out all forms of political dissension (Moreno, 1994:46). Relations between the U.S. and Guatemala continued to be strained.

As late as 1990, Washington was still threatening to cut off aid if human rights abuses did not stop (Robinson, 1991:155).

The goal of establishing a strong democracy in Guatemala has not been achieved. The threatened and actual withdrawal of U.S. security assistance was used in hopes that it might lead to the elimination of behaviors that destroy democratic tendencies in government. Instead, Guatemala was able to maintain those behaviors by exploiting other sources for the military assistance it required when the U.S. was unwilling to supply it. The economic aid spent for health, education, and agriculture had little effect on improving the lot of the common individual. In 1985, 43 percent of the population was either unemployed or underemployed (Moreno, 1994:45). It is evident that much reform needs to take place before America's objective of Guatemalan democracy can be achieved.

### Nicaragua

The United States has always maintained a strong foreign policy association with Nicaragua. Up until the mid-1970s, when the Somoza government began to crumble, Nicaragua was a staunch U.S. ally. For almost 43 years, the Somoza family ran Nicaragua as if the country were its own private domain. The elder Somoza, who had been educated in the United States, won the presidency in 1936 and remained in power until his assassination in 1956. For the next 20 years, one of Somoza's two sons or a family surrogate, with a Somoza in charge of the military, ran the country. Somoza's sons were also American educated, the youngest graduating from the U.S. Military Academy. The Somozas robbed the country of much of its wealth, including siphoning off millions of

dollars in disaster relief from the U.S. after a devastating earthquake in 1972. In 1979, their in-country holdings were valued at half a billion dollars with an unknown amount held in the U.S. and Europe (Schroeder, 1987:11). Many Nicaraguans believe that the Somoza family was able to maintain its dictatorship for 45 years only through the support it received from the United States (National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, 1984:30).

The security assistance given to Nicaraguan forces after President Somoza's fall provides a classic example of how the U.S. used military assistance during the Cold War for the purpose of containing the spread of communism. This goal became paramount during the Reagan presidency, supplanting other traditional foreign policy objectives such as protecting human rights.

The U.S. Congress mandated in 1976 that a human rights coordinator be appointed who would publish an annual report on the status of human rights in all countries that received U.S. aid. Many in Congress felt that foreign assistance could be used to advance social reform and therefore prevent the type of social revolution that took place in Vietnam and required extensive U.S. military intervention (Bermann, 1986:259). A good human rights record was made a pre-condition for any country receiving U.S. arms and military training.

Carter agreed with the basic premise that human rights violators should be denied U.S. aid but he also saw an inherent conflict in this policy. Repressive governments could only stay in power through oppression and terror. If forced to undergo human rights reform in

exchange for American aid, they would be undermining their source of power, leaving themselves vulnerable. By upsetting the status quo, the U.S. could be helping to create ideal conditions for leftist revolutions. In this case, national security interests would be subordinate to human rights concerns (LaFeber, 1991:12).

The Somoza regime was identified as a consistent violator of human rights in the U.S. government's first human rights report, published in 1977. Some types of military assistance were denied. Somoza's opponents interpreted this action to mean that Somoza was losing support from the Carter administration (Black, 1982:177). In early 1978, a newspaper editor, outspokenly critical of the Somoza government, was assassinated. A general strike occurred, embodying elements of the poor, the middle class, and the business community. This was the first indication that Somoza's government was in danger of being overthrown (Schroeder, 1987:12).

Carter, in reality, was seeking a middle ground. He attempted to wrest reforms from the Somoza government while trying to preserve the status quo, fearing that the government would fall to leftists if Nicaragua's National Guard did not enforce the old order (Black, 1982:177). His actions created a foreign policy failure. By striving to retain Somoza's politically moderate government, he failed to recognize and negotiate with other moderate elements (Armstrong and Shenk, 1982:113). Nicaragua fell to Marxist revolutionaries in 1979 (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:329).

The new Sandinista government sought friendly relations with the United States. Nicaragua was in dire need of economic assistance and its close proximity to the United

States made some sort of relationship a necessity. Carter adopted a stance of “qualified generosity” to better influence the Sandinistas without sending them further to the left into the Soviet bloc (Black, 1982:177). He authorized an \$8 million aid package for disaster relief and an additional \$75 million in 1980 contingent upon certification that the Sandinistas were not supporting the rebels in El Salvador (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:329).

Reagan was unequivocally hostile to the new Sandinista government. He believed it represented Cuban and Soviet intervention in America’s sphere of influence and began to undermine it in his campaign for President. There was much disagreement at the time about the true nature of the early Sandinista government. It allowed opposition parties to function and most of the land and service industry remained privately owned. However, a U.S. trade embargo pushed Nicaragua closer to Cuba and the Soviet Union. As time passed, the Sandinista movement began to more closely resemble the Cuban revolution (Skidmore and Smith, 1992:330).

Once elected, Reagan suspended \$15 million of the \$75 million aid package Carter had authorized the Sandinistas for 1980 because he believed they were supporting the Salvadoran rebels. Nicaragua denied the charge. Reagan then suspended all aid to Nicaragua and increased aid to the military governments in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Reagan believed these three countries would be the next targets for Soviet intervention (Black, 1982:179).

At the end of 1981, Reagan authorized the CIA to begin covert operations against the Sandinistas by aiding the Contras, counterrevolutionaries mainly consisting of ex-Somoza followers. The Contras were nationalistic, anti-Cuban, and anti-Soviet. A \$19.95 million military assistance package was initially authorized to build an army of 500 men (Moreno, 1994:27).

The Contra war gradually escalated over the next three years until, in 1984, the Contras mined Nicaraguan harbors causing six international ships to be damaged, including one Soviet oil tanker (Moreno, 1994:28). The public uproar that followed caused Congress to vote to end all aid to the Contras. However, the National Security Council continued to aid the Contras illegally through covert operations, diverting funds from the sale of weapons to Iran. Also, between 1984 and 1986, Reagan was able to use his influence to legally raise \$42 million from other countries and \$25 million from private organizations (Moreno, 1994:72).

Reagan used his landslide reelection victory in 1984 to try to win public support for the Contras in a campaign directed at the American people. However, it was not successful and Congress rejected his request in 1985 for \$14 million in aid. Shortly after this Sandinista victory in Congress, their leader Daniel Ortega visited the Soviet Union. Reagan took advantage of this to again request aid for the Contras, armed with fresh evidence of Soviet influence in Central America. This time, Reagan's campaign was successful and Congress approved \$27 million in aid. The following year, with Reagan's

popularity among the American people at an all-time high, Congress approved \$100 million in aid to the Contras (Moreno, 1994:74).

The Sandinistas began using Soviet helicopters and defeated the main Contra force by 1986. Public disclosure of the illegal activities conducted by the National Security Council, known as the Iran-Contra scandal, ended what little Congressional support still remained for Reagan's Nicaragua policy by 1987 (Moreno, 1994:74). Humanitarian assistance was extended to the Contras well into 1988, but without U.S. military assistance they had no chance of rebuilding into a credible force. Between 1986 and 1990, the Contras were reduced to a small band of rebels that had to resort to terrorism to achieve their objectives (Moreno, 1994:28).

Reagan's goal of preventing communism from spreading to the continents of the Western hemisphere was achieved. It is unclear what role military assistance played, however. The Reagan government never wavered in its support for the Contras. Even when Congress refused to honor requests for assistance and the American public no longer supported Reagan's Nicaraguan foreign policy, administration officials diverted funds from other areas to continue the support. The Contras were eventually defeated in spite of the backing of a powerful ally, the United States. If the American public had supported military assistance to the same degree as the Reagan administration, the outcome might have been quite different for the Contras. The Sandinistas were defeated in 1990, in an election they were forced to conduct through a combination of political pressure from the

world community and economic necessity (Moreno, 1994:30). It is unclear if the Sandinistas would have felt the same pressures for reform if the Contras had not waged their ten-year war with the help of the United States.



## VI. Conclusion

The Monroe Doctrine was the cornerstone of United States foreign policy toward Latin America for over 100 years. During its first century, America's main concern was that no other country threaten to intrude upon its sphere of influence in the region. However, it lacked the economic and military power, as well as the political will, to significantly impact the development of Latin America.

As the 20th century dawned and America grew in power and prestige, its policy became one of intervention and imperialism in Latin America, the so called "Big Stick" diplomacy of the Roosevelt era. By the beginning of World War II, the United States exercised virtual hegemony over the region. However, Latin American economic and social development was not seen as a priority. U.S. influence was more often used to try to manipulate the political process of a country rather than achieve economic or social reform.

During and immediately after World War II, the U.S. government recognized the need for a collective defense of the Western hemisphere against the Axis powers and enlisted the aid of Latin American countries. When no threat to Western security materialized, the U.S. was again indifferent to Latin America's economic and social problems while it focused its attention on rebuilding Europe and Japan.

With the advent of the Cold War, affairs in Latin America began to take on a new significance for U.S. national security. The Cold War brought to light a new enemy, communism, that could threaten U.S. interests by spreading to Latin America. The

Organization of American States was created to formalize the goal of collective security, while stressing nonintervention into a country's internal affairs by other members of the organization.

U.S. arms transfers to Latin America began in earnest during the early Cold War. Internal subversion appeared to be the most likely area where the communist threat would surface. Therefore, the Latin American governments had to be prepared to fight against communism within their borders. Military assistance was provided generously during this period. However, Latin America's fundamental economic and social problems were not being addressed by the United States.

U.S. failure to abide by the nonintervention policy in the overthrow of Guatemalan President Arbenz in 1955 and the installation of his successor, pro-U.S. President Armas added to the anti-American sentiments that were growing in Latin America. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion only increased this anti-imperialist feeling. Furthermore, the event that U.S. policymakers had feared since the beginning of the Cold War had occurred; the communists had established a beachhead in the Western hemisphere, Cuba.

Kennedy formed a new Latin American policy in response to the Cuban Revolution. The Alliance for Progress stressed economic and social development programs on the theory that a country enjoying economic prosperity and political freedoms would be less likely to succumb to the promises that communism offered. The Alliance for Progress was established to help achieve democratic forms of government in Latin American countries.

However, Kennedy also increased military aid to fight subversive elements in Latin America that would undoubtedly be supported from Cuba and the Soviet Union.

The Alliance for Progress did not achieve its lofty goal of establishing democracy throughout Latin America. This goal conflicted with the goal of containing the spread of communism in Brazil. Freely elected President Goulart was deposed in a military coup supported by the U.S. because his government was considered to be too aligned with leftist thinking. The military government that ruled until 1985 was considered highly repressive and averse to any type of social reform.

The Nixon Doctrine represented a change toward Latin America from an emphasis on economic development and social reform to a policy more closely resembling that of the 1950s, stressing military assistance. Nixon and the American people were afraid of another military entanglement like that of Vietnam. Therefore, the U.S. was more willing to supply large amounts of military assistance so that Latin American countries could handle their own threats without the aid of American troops. Military assistance to repressive regimes was justified if it appeared the aid was being used to ward off communism.

This aid to repressive regimes led to public outcries in the early 1970s that the U.S. was supporting dictators that engaged in human rights violations. Congress began placing limits on military aid and made the provision of aid conditional upon a country's support for basic human rights. This conflicted with America's traditional objective of keeping communism out of the Western hemisphere. If forced to undergo social reform to receive

American aid, repressive governments would be undermining the power base that kept them in authority, leaving the door open for leftist revolutionary elements to come to power. This was clearly not in the interests of the United States.

Carter's failure to negotiate with moderate elements after Somoza's fall in Nicaragua was a result of trying to accommodate both sides in this human rights versus national interest conflict. Somoza was a ruthless dictator but Carter tried to extract promises of human rights reform from him in exchange for American aid. At the same time, Carter failed to realize the strength of revolutionary forces that were moving against Somoza's government. Nicaragua fell to Marxists with ties to the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Carter was determined that the same mistake not be repeated in El Salvador. Because of the fear that El Salvador would fall to communism, the United States spent ten years supporting one of the worst violators of human rights in the whole of Latin America. Reagan had to certify to Congress that El Salvador was making progress in its social reforms for the aid to continue. He did so, with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, so that the government of El Salvador could continue its fight against leftist guerrillas.

Reagan also supported the Contras, a guerrilla movement fighting the government in Nicaragua, with both legal aid provided by Congress and illegal aid received from the diversion of funds from other sources. The rebel forces in both Nicaragua and El Salvador were eventually defeated. The leftist government in Nicaragua was defeated at the ballot box in elections forced upon it by a combination of political and economic pressure from other countries in the region. Both countries began the long process of economic and

social reform. Scholars debate as to whether the military assistance given to these countries was really necessary to defeat insurgents or if they would have been defeated anyway by the natural course of events that take place in a country's development.

When the Cold War ended in the late 1980s with the demise of the Soviet Union, there was no longer any need to fight communism on the battlefields of Central and South America. America's primary goal for Latin America will no longer be prevention of a Communist takeover. The new challenges of expanding trade, eliminating illegal drugs, and dealing with illegal migration have taken priority. It is easy to understand why security assistance was used in the past. Military might was needed to fight and win the Cold War. It is more difficult to envision how security assistance will be able to help in meeting the challenges of the future.

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### Vita

Capt Valerie S. Payne was born on 14 January 1957 in Geneseo, Illinois. She graduated from high school in Williamsfield, Illinois in 1975. She began her undergraduate studies at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, in 1984 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science in May 1987. She received her commission that same month through the Reserved Officers Training Corps. Her first assignment was at Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan as the Vehicle Operations Officer. Her second assignment was at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska as the Passenger Services Officer. In May 1994, she entered the School of Logistics and Acquisitions Management, Air Force Institute of Technology.

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| 13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)<br><br>The United States employs security assistance as an instrument of foreign policy. This thesis examines how security assistance was used to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives in Latin America since the end of World War II. Qualitative analysis was used consisting of historical and archival research of government documents and secondary sources. A literature review was conducted to discover general trends concerning security assistance to include its establishment as an arm of foreign policy, its problems, and its purpose. Presidential policies toward Latin America are analyzed during and after World War II, to include Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, Nixon Doctrine, Carter's human rights policies, and the containment policies of Reagan. The histories of five Latin American countries are examined to specifically discover how the U.S. has used security assistance to achieve its foreign policy objectives. The countries examined are Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Findings concerning South American countries include a tendency for the U.S. to use security assistance as an incentive to reward democratic and pro-U.S. behaviors. Findings in Central America include the use of security assistance to fight internal subversion in an effort to maintain the status quo and deter communism. |                                                             |                                                            |                                                                        |                                                     |
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